/51 cont'd/
585 dong (transliteration) are in bloom. It is said that this period of the year is unlucky for marriage. The best times for a marriage are in the eleventh month, twelfth month, and the first month.

3. Funeral Service

764 The funeral is usually held on the second day after the death of a Miao. Without waiting for a request from the dead man's family, his fellow villagers gather together voluntarily to offer their assistance in attending to the funeral rites. The coffin is made of wood. After the corpse is placed in it, the coffin is taken out through the main entrance. Three burning incense sticks are put in front of the coffin. At the same time, a man holding a big knife chants incantations toward the coffin. [793] After the coffin is covered, two Taoist priests face the dead person and pray. It is said that they pray that he, in the other world, will bless the children he has left behind. A priest cuts three ropes which were previously put on top of the coffin. It is said that the idea of this is to tell the deceased that the different paths of yin and yang are now separated by this. After the dead man's children have set their finger prints on the coffin, it is carried by four men to the grave site and interred. A simple band of musicians and the dead man's son (or sons) accompanies the coffin to the grave. If his son (or sons) is too young, he only escorts the coffin to the gate of the village. Daughters do not accompany the coffin. After the burial, the funeral is over. The Miao do not have any post-[769] funeral services as the Chinese do, such as the "Seventh Day Memorial Services," "Anniversary Memorial Service," "Third Anniversary Memorial Service," "Tomb-sweeping Ceremony," etc. While the burial is taking place the hats of the dead man's children [765] are fastened with hemp strings to indicate mourning. After the burial is over, they are taken off.

765 According to Miao superstition, the tso-chai service is necessary before the soul of the deceased can reach its final resting place. [771] The tso-chai service of the Miao is similar to the chien-chiao service of the Chinese. /52/ According to Miao custom, this service is held within one or two years after the death. The service may last

/52 cont'd/

765 for one day, two, three, or five days. What I observed was a two-day service which actually lasted two days and two nights.

●[713] The tso-chai service was conducted by Taoist priests. On the occasion which I observed, they invited more than ten Taoist priests of two different groups, the civilian Taoist priests and the military Taoist priests. The two groups paid honor to different gods, chanted different liturgies, and performed different rituals. (See the following chapter.) The tso-chai service was so complicated that it can hardly be described in detail. Therefore, I shall only describe it in a general way. The tso-chai ceremony formally began on the night of the first day of the service. The Taoist priests of the two groups hung up portraits of their respective gods. At the same time they chanted liturgies and leaped before the gods until midnight. Next morning they performed the chao-hun /"spirit calling"/ service. It was in general as follows: A wooden platform was erected in an open space outside the house. The two groups of chanting Taoist priests holding pennants in their hands ascended the platform in turn. Facing the sky, they called the spirit of the dead man to come back.

765 796 That afternoon a Taoist initiation ceremony was held. Since it was not directly included in the tso-chai service, we will discuss it in the following chapter. On the morning and afternoon of the third day the chanting of liturgies and the dancing continued, but the details were entirely different from that of the day before. The tso-chai ended near evening in a humorous act, "Devil Dance." The dance was performed as follows: A priest was dressed up as a devil wearing a dreadful-looking mask and hid behind the curtain. Two boys dressed as girls drew the devil out from behind the curtain. After seeing the "girls" the devil then became sexually excited, and holding a male sexual organ two to three feet /ch'ih/ long (made of straw), he began dancing while chasing the two "girls." The show was so indecent that it made a person feel ashamed to watch it. In the morning of the fourth day, the hosts entertained the priests with wine. Guests and hosts sang alternately while drinking, and that brought the tso-chai to an end.

/53 cont'd/

526 As far as I know, there is one kind of recreation popular among
171 the Miao. This is to swing on a rope string, which is usually done in late spring and early summer. The construction and use of the swing among the Miao are similar to that of the Li. It has been described in detail in my previous book, Report on an Investigation of the Li of Hainan Island, and a repetition here is not necessary.

/54/ Chapter VII. Religion, Superstitions, etc.

771 1. Taoist Priests

Taoism is the only religion of the Miao. It has greatly in-
●793 fluenced their social life. Those who conduct the religious ceremony are the Taoist priests, who are divided into two different groups, the civilian Taoist priests and the military Taoist priests.
795 The pictures and religious texts used by these two groups are entire-
776 ly different. As I saw during the tso-chai ceremony, the gods worshiped by the civilian group were Li Hsieh Wang, Tsu Kung, Shen Nung, Tou Kung, and others. Those worshiped by the military group were Yü Ch'ing, Shang Ch'ing, T'ai Ch'ing, Shang Yüan, Chung Yüan, Hsia Yüan, Yang Hu, and others. There is a pictorial representation of each god. In general, the gods of the civilian group have large heads and those of the military group have smaller
779 ones. In addition to the gods mentioned above, I have found other
776 names in Taoist classics, which are as follows:

T'an Kuan	Chiu Kuan	Ch'en Shih-wu Kuan
Li Hsin-sheng	Kung Huang	Chia Kuan
Ti Szu	An-t'an Ch'uan	Chiu Niang /The ninth lady/
Younger sister Fu-ch'i	Yü Huang	Lui-chia Min-kuan (Lui Kung)
Ching Chu	Chia Hsien	Tang-nien Wen Chu /The god of the year's plague/

/62 cont'd/

779 Hundreds of birds bowed in front of it.
539 The goddess of jade protected her from behind.
When a Taoist priest passed by, he would repeat the name of Buddha;
When a Buddhist priest passed by, he would burn some incense.
When an old man of sixty passed by, he would say mournfully:
"What a pity that one so bright died young!"
When an old woman of sixty passed by, she might say sadly:
"What a pity one so bright did not live long!"
When a young fellow of eighteen passed by, he would murmur:
"Why am I not so lucky as to court a clever girl like her?"
When a young girl of eighteen passed by, she might say with grief,
"Why did such a clever girl have to be buried so young?"
Men and women are kindly advised hereby,
If you have children, think early of their futures.
Should your neighbor to the east have a son, his marriage must not wait long!
Should your neighbor to the west have a daughter, must she not be married while young?
One must not follow the example of Sister Chiu of the T'ang family,
Without a husband, she died like a blossoming /rose/.
Chiu-niang is now here in person to bless those in front of the altar.
You, Chiu-niang, give your blessing to whoever is leading the horse.

779 The Taoist books of the Miao are mostly written in this poetic
195 style with seven words in each line. They have nothing to do with the preaching of Taoism. This aspect is /63/ worthy of study.
793 Both the civilian and military Taoist priests use wooden seals in-
795 scribed with different symbols. The civilian Taoist priests have two rectangular seals of the same size, (See illustration). The military Taoist priests also have two wooden seals, one of which is inscribed with symbols similar to those of the civilian Taoist priests.

1: Wang--63a S-5 (1937) 1948 AE5 Miao AE5

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The Seal of the Civilian Taoist Priests (1)

The Seal of the Military Taoist Priests (1)

(The black part is raised, the white recessed.)

The Seal of the Civilian Taoist Priests (2)

/64/

532 The other one is inscribed on four sides of the seal with the symbol of a man, a dog, a dragon (?), and a pheonix (?) respectively. It is very interesting that the second seal is entirely different from the first one. (See illustration).

796 /65/Usually whenever a ceremony is performed both the civil-
●793 ian and military Taoist priests are present. This was the case in both the tso-chai and the chung-jen chai ceremonies that I personally observed.

793 The Taoist priesthood is open only to men. A man who intends to be a Taoist priest must undergo a kind of Taoist initiation ceremony, one of which I once attended. It took place at the time of a tso-chai ceremony. As to whether they also have a particular ceremony for initiation at a fixed time and place, I do not know. The initiation rites of the civilian and military groups were conducted in much the same manner.

The manner in which a military priest was initiated was as follows: The candiate wearing a red Taoist robe were seated on a red rug (each priest has a red rug) in front of the altar. A piece of thin paper was put on his head. A picture of a god was fastened with red strings hung from his forehead. A group of old (referring to rank regardless of age) Taoist priests chanted and walked around him. Periodically at every stop of the chanting, they all kneeled down, tearing apart the thin paper on his head, after which they again walked around him. This was done three times. A pause in the ceremony was now announced.

After a short time the candidate was led into an open yard by the old priests and followed by other priests playing gongs and drums. While they were proceeding to the yard, the oldest /i.e. leading/ priest put a grass rug on the ground on which he turned several somersaults. In the yard the candiate was seated in front of a wooden platform. The old priests then took turns in going up the platform upon which they chanted and danced. When the chanting was over, a large net made of tree bark was spread out. The candidate was thrown into it and was lifted up and turned around

1: Wang--64a S-5 (1937) 1948 AE5 Miao AE5

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The Seal of the Military Taoist Priests (2)

(b)

(a)

(c)

(d)

/65 cont'd/

793 several times and then put back on the ground. After that he was entertained with a meal and wine. Then they returned to the altar. The ceremony was now over.

The initiation ceremony of the civilian Taoist priests was similar to that of the military group. The only difference between them was that they did not have the part performed in the yard. Moreover, at the time the civilian priests chanted before the altar, when they kneeled down after chanting, they combed the hair of the candiate with a wooden comb, which was not done by the military priests.

793 554 /66/ After the Taoist initiation ceremony, the new priest was given a Taoist name. The names given by the two groups were entirely different. Either group, however, has a set of five characters any one of which is used as a prefix to another character in formulating a two-character name. The five characters of the civilian group were "Yin, Yün, Tao, Miao, and Wan," and those of the military group were "Ying, Sheng, Fa, Hsien, and Wan." The method of formulating a Taoist name was to put any one character after one of the five characters. For instance, Lu Tsun-ying, the chia-ch'ang of Ang-chi village was a civilian Taoist priest. His Taoist name was Yin-ts'ai. Thus every Taoist priest's name clearly indicates whether he is a civilian or military priest. Moreover, the order of the Taoist names is followed by father and son. As Lu Tsun-ying's Taoist name is Yin-ts'ai, his son's Taoist name would be Yün-X. His grandson's Taoist name would be Tao-X. At the end of the series, they start over again at the beginning. There is no age limit for the Taoist initiation. During the initiation ceremony which I observed there were five candiates, of whom the oldest was about twenty and the youngest one was a two- or three-year-old unweaned child who was carried by his mother. Right after the initiation the older ones begin to learn to chant the liturgies and to perform other ritual matters from the older priests, and after some time they could carry out their duties as priests. The younger ones have to wait for a period of years, before studying but once one is initiated, one is qualified to have the status of a Taoist priest.

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715 713 Since Taoism has a great influence upon the lives of the Miao, the Taoist priests therefore assume great importance in Miao society. Furthermore, only a man with the qualifications of a Taoist priest has the opportunity to read the classics and receive an education, and thus to acquire specialized knowledge. Consequently, Taoist 554 priests enjoy a higher social status than an ordinary person and with it, many special privileges. Under such circumstances, all families, except those under very poor economic conditions, (the initiation ceremony costs money) always send their sons to be initiated for the Taoist priesthood. The fact that the above-mentioned unweaned child was carried there by his mother shows how anxious the parents are to have their children initiated. /67/

776 2. Names of the Important Gods

There are many gods which are worshiped by the Miao. According to what they told me, the most important gods are the following:

(a) Yü-huang—the greatest god in heaven;
(b) T'u-ti-kung—the greatest god on earth;
(c) Ching-chü-kung—the greatest mountain god;
(d) Hai-lung-wang—the greatest water god.

3. Traces of Totem Worship

771 According to Miao legend, which will be discussed in the next 789 chapter, the dog was their first ancestor; that was their totem. 825 Traces of totem worship still remain in their everyday life. Though [762] there are dogs in every family, yet they have never killed them for food. They let the dogs die a natural death, or they trade the dogs with the Li people for other commodities. I have observed this kind of transaction. This apparently derives from the old custom [784] of the totemic society, i.e. "to kill totem animals is taboo." Furthermore, the fact that the seal of the military Taoists was inscribed with an outline of a dog might also have some significance here, which is worth noting. /68/

/134 cont'd/

764 daughters, the eldest being only twelve or thirteen years of age. These orphans had had the misfortune of losing their father the previous year. Now they had also lost their mother and wept without raising their heads. We felt very sorry for them and gave them some 50 copper coins. Though our gift could not relieve their distress, we felt a little better in our hearts.

765 The tso-chai started in the evening. The bamboo shed was filled with pictures of gods on the walls. On one side were the military gods and on the other the civilian gods, the distinction between them being rather strict. The Taoist priests were likewise divided into military and civilian groups and were on opposite sides. The methods and texts they used were also different from each other's.

/135/ Second month, twenty-seventh day. (Saturday)

The program for the tso-chai today was: in the morning the chao hun /"to call back the soul"/, in the afternoon the ch'uan tao /"to summon to Taoist priesthood"/. The chao hun was the calling back of the souls of the dead, and was like the Chinese ritual. The ch'uan tao has nothing to do with the tso-chai, but has great significance in Miao social life. From what people say, Taoist priests, 554 who carry out the religious duties, enjoy higher social status than ●793 ordinary people and various special privileges. Therefore, Miao men, unless held back by financial difficulties (because carrying out the ch'uan tao ceremony entails an expenditure of money), invariably undergo the ch'uan tao baptismal rite. Moreover, each [779] kind of Taoist priest has its canons, the only written literature of the Miao. One must have the qualifications of a Taoist priest in order to be able to receive this kind of literary education. In this respect religious instruction and education can be said to be one. The priests are also privileged in possessing special knowledge of other sorts, which the ordinary Miao cannot get, which naturally contributes further to their special social position. Today those who received the ch'uan tao baptismal rite were: four as civilian priests, the eldest being some twenty years old and the youngest an unweaned

/135 cont'd/

554 baby who was held during the ceremony; and one as a military
793 priest, also very young. All these children were qualified to become Taoist priests after undergoing this baptismal rite and could perform the duties of priests when they reached manhood. In the evening these children practiced the dances of Taoist priests on the grass, their steps being accompanied by the sound of drums and gongs. The uniformity of their steps and the agility of their movements amazed me and made me think what a pity it was that these bright youngsters were being properly educated when they showed such unmistakable promise!

Second month, twenty-eighth day. (Sunday)

538 In the morning we copied many different Miao songs and legends, one of which depicted the story of a romance between Mr. Yan Hui and Miss Chang Chiu-niang. The way in which the story made fun of the saints and followers impressed me, but the origin of the story was untraceable and would be interesting to study further.

765 In the evening the tso-chai ceremony was completed. The military priests put on a last, short act, the t'iao kuei ("dancing demon"). One priest played the role of the demon with a mask on, /136/ which looked hideous. Hidden behind a screen, he was lured out by two boys disguised as girls. Seeing the "girls," the demon became wild and erected his penis, measuring some two or three ch'ih in length (made of a bundle of straw). Leaping wildly left and right, he chased after the "girls." It was an extremely obscene act.

Third month, first day. (Monday)

533 In the morning Headman Lu prepared a rich banquet at his home
527 for all the priests. The hostess appeared to express thanks to the priests one by one in words and songs. The priests, likewise, sang in their turn, creating an atmosphere of harmony and hospitality at the feast.

4:Mickey E-5 (1940-?) 1947 AE5 Miao AE5

as in their homes, they could entertain kinsmen who had come in to market. 265

Associations. As far as I could determine, the Cowrie Shell Miao had no associations. 575

Religious Institutions. The Cowrie Shell Miao had no formally organized religious communities. They did, however, have religious specialists, including priests. These were the men who performed certain ritual acts, though at other times they were just like other members of the community. Like all other members of the community they were farmers, heads or younger members of families, taking part in the usual economic activities of family and village. As priests they did not take the lead in rites of intensification such as calendric feasts and bullfights, as these were family concerns, and the head of the family presided. However, they had a definite part to play in childbirth, preservation of the good fortune of the house and village, death and burial, and the initial acts of a bullfight and the cyclical sacrifice. Rarely was a priest called in in case of illness; usually a shamaness was asked to perform her ritual in such circumstances. There were at least six priests and three shamanesses in the village. In one case a Taoist priest from Kou-ch'ang was asked to conduct his ritual in behalf of a sick woman. This consisted of chanting and shaking his pieces of iron and clappers as he moved about in a loose-jointed manner. In another instance a woman from a different village came to perform in behalf of a sick child. 793 791 771

Once in the village and once in Lung-li, I saw something which the head of our family told me was "Our P'u Sa." The Lung-li postmaster, a native of the province, said it was "a country superstition," not believed in by the Lung-li Chinese. *P'u Sa* is the Chinese word for Buddha and is often loosely used, as here, just for "deity." A man came to the village with a little red, wooden house on a bamboo pole which he set up before each house in turn, much as the priest and his assistants went from house to house "to bring good fortune." I did not find out whence he had come. The little house could stand firmly without support. The man stood beside it and chanted in Miao, beating the side of the house as he did so, and a gong suspended below the shrine 778 788

4:Mickey E-5 (1940-?) 1947 AE5 Miao AE5

women. One man of fifty-odd died from the kick of a cow, one of nearly seventy of heart trouble. Two old women of eighty-four and seventy-six died of old age. There were at least thirteen births in the period. This would have resulted in a slight increase in population had there not been families who moved to other villages.

Priests. The day that the wife of Cheng-hsiang was in labor for her second son, the old man who lived in the other part of their house and who was a head carpenter and a maker of bamboo articles such as scoops and baskets, set a bowl of rice grains with three lighted incense sticks in it on a bench and a bowl of wine on the floor in front of it. Then, holding a small chicken in his left hand, he chanted in Miao, cast lots with four pieces of bamboo, spilled out some of the wine, and then cast lots again. Finally he spilled all of the wine, took up the bowl of rice, and the bamboo pieces and went away. This was done in the room outside of the one in which she was confined, and the priest faced her door as he went through the ritual.

On that same day I saw the oldest and most proficient priest in the village squatting before a tripod of bamboo branches, behind and facing the corner of that house. Before him were a bowl of rice and one of wine. As he chanted he cast lots with pieces of bamboo. A boy from the house before which he was chanting brought him a piece of smoked pork in a loop of straw, a small bundle of straw, and a cleaver. He cut off a piece of the meat and put it on the burning straw, after which he spilled some of the wine on the ground.

Twice I saw this man with two younger men going solemnly from house to house. The first time the older man carried a bowl of rice, one of the others a gong, and the third a long staff of bamboo with colored paper streamers and leaves at the top, and a bag with rice in it. The man who carried the gong struck it as they went from one house to the next. At each house the older man entered and set his bowl of rice on a stool or bench, then, facing the door, chanted. The man with the staff and rice bag set the former down beside the door and both younger men went in. In each house they gave them a small measure of rice for the bag. The second time

4:Mickey E-5 (1940-?) 1947 AE5 Miao AE5

the older man carried a live duck and a bowl of wine, one of the younger men a bag for rice, and the other a staff with leaves and white paper streamers, and a handful of spirit money. The older man chanted as before and kept muttering to himself as he went from one house to another. They told me this was called *sao ho hui*.

The activities of the priest in connection with death and burial have already been described. The priest also has a part to play in connection with bullfights (see pp. 76–80).

The ritual which Miss Li saw took place just outside of the village in the presence of the baby's father. This priest had before him a bowl of rice and one of wine. In his arm he held a live duck. After he had chanted he set an egg into the bowl of rice, spilled some of the wine, felt in the earth for "the child's spirit, or soul," wrapped up a bit of the earth in a cloth and gave it to the father, who took it and the duck and went home. The child died.

Before the taoist priest chanted, a table was set up before the shrine to the house god in the main hall of the house, partly in and partly out of the pile of unhulled rice lying there. Along the front of the table was the festoon of wooden daggers which usually hung above the door of this house. On the table were one of the priest's sacred books, a banner of white paper in a bamboo stick, a measure of rice with incense sticks in it, several bowls, and some bamboo lots. I had been invited to have supper with them because I had been helping them cut rice that day. While we were waiting for supper to be prepared in the home of the son, next door, we sat in the front side room in which the wife of the head of the house lay on a pallet of straw by the fire. The priest showed me three books from a bagful which he had brought with him. One contained his chants, one charts of the face with points marked on it, and the third explanations of the meaning of the dragon and other sacred things. Before he chanted again he took down a book which he had laid on the woven bamboo shelf above the fire, and placed it on the table. The three books I had been examining he put where the first book had been.

This man was dressed in a pair of loose khaki trousers and an old jersey. As he sang

4:Mickey E-5 (1940-?)1947 AE5 Miao AE5

788 793 or chanted, he was quite lively, sometimes facing the shrine, sometimes the door. In his right hand he jangled a chain with pieces of iron on it, and with his left hand he clacked pieces of wood. While he chanted he directed one of the sons of the family to burn spirit money at the door. Some had been burned before the table during the afternoon. He ate supper with us, but left early and went back to chant again.

This was the only home in the village which had the festoon of wooden daggers. I saw them in a Ch'ing Miao village near An-shun, where snail shells from a certain mountain were used in the same way, as a charm against evil. The Ch'ing Miao houses also had many imprints of hands in lime, and crude drawings of men, one holding a dagger, in lime on the outer walls of their houses. There they also hung up the placenta of a child in a bowl over the door. In Yünnan where I saw the hands in lime on the houses it was said to be a charm against disease, or to have been put on a house where a death had occurred. In Lung-li one of these priests was called in on behalf of the postmaster when he was ill. The procedure was about the same, but a chicken was killed and eaten by the family and by his wife's relatives, who had been visiting them and who had called in the priest.

788 755 793

791 788 755 **The Priestess, or Shamaness.** (In Miao, "*mu la*" or "*mo wa.*") There were three women in the village who were able to go into a trance, sing a certain song, and get a message from the spirits in times of trouble or illness. The eldest one, nearly sixty years old, was said by Miss Li to be famous for her skill. The one surnamed T'ang moved away while I lived in Lung-li. All of them sang in Miao, though Miss Li said the oldest one also sang in Chinese. Their instructions to the one who brought them the articles they used in the ceremony and their message were either in Chinese or in Miao. Usually the ritual lasted nearly two hours. The most elaborate one I saw lasted almost all day. Afterward a good meal was prepared, of which the main dish was the fowl — chicken or duck — killed during the ceremony. The shamaness was the

*Thirty cents in Chinese currency.

[168 cont.]

776 tormenting human beings, they have no fear at all of these bad spirits, contrary to what we have seen in the "Thai" and especially in the "Man." Also the "Thai" and the "Man" consider the "Méo" as men of a special species.

774 775 [169] The "Méo" think that men have three souls, "pli," that reincarnate themselves in the bodies of pregnant women. (See note on page 178.)

●793 They have the priest-sorcerers who preside at the ceremonies and have the power of communicating with the spirits. These priests are illiterate and receive no initiation. The tribal traditions, the curtailed rites, and the few formulas of exorcism or of incantation are orally transmitted. The office is usually hereditary.

796 The "Méo" celebrate a great many festivals, which are so many occasions for having a spree. At the beginning of the year, the spirits of heaven, of the earth, and of the hearth are especially feted, as well as the ancestors. At planting time, sacrifices are made to the spirit of the mountains, protector of the crops. After the harvest, further sacrifices to the spirit of the mountains and to the ancestors. The third day of the fifth month, a special celebration at the time of the harvesting of medicinal herbs. Besides these ceremonies on fixed dates, the "Méo" carefully celebrate the anniversaries [527] of births and of other happy events. All these festivals consist of feasting and drinking intermingled with songs and dances. The "Méo" [157] nature is carefree and very gay; he loves music and dancing. The [831] songs, in "Méo" dialect, are always obscene and even erotic. The [533] dance, performed only by the men, is most often done while playing [535] the "sen." The player keeps his knees bent and the upper part of his body leaning forward. He jumps from one foot to the other, either while turning about or going forward or backward, but without ceasing his playing. (Photo 155, Plate 40.)

524 The "Méo" children very often play the game of the revolving seesaw, which they probably got from the Chinese. A solid post, deeply planted in the earth, terminates at its upper end in a central peg, on which is balanced a very big pole, which has for this purpose a hole through its center. This pole is movable horizontally about the axis formed by the central peg described above. It is also movable